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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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May 18, 2007

Ministry of Education

FREE ONLINE TUTORING EXPANDED TO GRADE 12 STUDENTS

VICTORIA – B.C.'s Grade 12 students will soon be able to take advantage of free tutoring for seven additional subjects through LearnNow BC, the Province's virtual school, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced today.

"This first-rate service includes one-on-one help and so we're pleased to have these new Grade 12 subjects available now, right before provincial exams, when students need it most," said Bond. "Our government is working to improve student achievement by listening to students and giving them the tools they need – tools that support their learning."

The Grade 12 courses being added to LearnNow BC are biology, chemistry, geography, geology, history, physics and Principles of Math. Online tutoring will be available starting May 22. Students can access course content, sample tests and tutoring by visiting LearnNow BC at www.learnnowbc.ca. The website offers Grade 12 students taking any of the newly added courses three ways to learn:

- Accredited teachers and peer tutors will be available via a chat room Sundays through Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. with extended hours each January and June to help students prepare for provincial exams.

- Workshops with accredited teachers will be featured nightly at 7:30 p.m., with logins available as of 7:15 p.m., and will be followed by an online group discussion, including a question-and-answer period on the session.

- StudyBUZZ, available 24 hours a day, allows students to test themselves and helps them assess which areas of study require more review and practice.

LearnNow BC is also being streamlined to make it more attractive and easy to navigate. The new website design will include a search engine so students can choose tutoring services by subject area or grade level.

"Adding these Grade 12 courses will benefit up to about 78,000 provincial exam writers, so we're making good use of technology to give more students more support than ever before," said Bond. "Government recently introduced new legislation to improve student achievement, and this will build on those initiatives."

When LearnNow BC was launched in October 2006, online tutoring was available only to distributed learning students taking Math 10 or Science 10. In January 2007, the service was expanded to include all B.C. students taking Essentials of Math 10, Principles of Math 10, Science 10 and Social Studies 11.

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LearnNow BC and the latest expansion of its online tutoring fulfils government's 2006 throne speech commitment to provide B.C. students with new options for learning and to help them successfully complete their studies. Other recently announced technology services that benefit students include the new virtual library reference service, AskAway, which connects users with 60 librarians from 46 public libraries and 100 librarians from 20 post-secondary institutions, all in real time, and in an easy-to-use live-chat format.

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Media contact: Lara Perzoff
Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963
250 920-9040 (cell)

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